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UNCLAS ABUJA 000389

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/DSS/ITA & DS/IP/FPO  
LAGOS FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: VIOLENT DISTURBANCE IN CENTRAL  
ABUJA

1. (SBU) On 20 February 2003, a GON Federal Task Force entered Area 1 of central Abuja and attempted to "clean up" the area by dismantling numerous illegal/unlicensed shops. Violence quickly erupted between the unlicensed traders and security forces. Tires were set ablaze in the street which temporarily blocked traffic and one individual was shot and killed by police. An angry mob attempted to parade the corpse to a nearby police command but was dispersed by security forces. The disturbance lasted approximately two hours before police restored order.

2. (SBU) Although this incident was not directed against official U.S. personnel, it is reported because it occurred only a few kilometers from the site of the New Embassy Compound (NEC).

3. (SBU) The GON's dismantling of illegal and unlicensed shops often spark significant disturbances within the capital.

JETER